

At. O. Frederick, N.Y. 11/21/73

Dear Belmont,

I don't see the Star-News out here, don't know if Sieb is still at the paper, so I write this protest-appeal to you, not personally but in the hope you will route it correctly. I write it after skimming Lee Winfrey's 11/15 piece that was better suited to The National Tatler.

All of you know that I have never sought any personal publicity of you and have sought less attention to my work than is normal in book promotions. Rather have I made repeated offers, asking nothing in return.

However, I should be well enough known so that when such a piece as this is prepared - and it bears internal evidence that some time and money was spent on it - I might have been consulted. Particularly when the piece was assigned to a reporter whose ignorance of the field and the literature is obvious.

The existing situation is the fault of the press. It has its own way of going for nuts and publicity seekers, of being taken in by promoters, and thereafter regarding these as those of substance in the field. My own history with the Star is different. I proposed a joint examination, as Sieb should remember, in which the Star would control doctrine. Nothing could be more open.

How little your own morgue was consulted in this is apparent from the listing of the books and their timing. The fact is that those described as the first wave were the second. The first is unmentioned. Nor are they the last. Of them one only is a substantial work. Two that might otherwise have been are so biased they cannot now be so regarded. Typically, they are the ones that got extensive press attention.

A commemoration of what by now might easily be recognized as a turning-point in history, which is separate from opinions of JFK as a man, is worth more than the Star-News gave it. The people, too, are entitled to more. To substance, not tinsel. Where you made contact with reality or with substance, save with the pathologists, you report nothing not dating to 1965, the first book and the unmentioned one. Where you deal with the pathologists, ^{you} apparently have not bothered to make an evaluation based on what they have said in the past and without asking them what they have done other than look at film. An obvious question is whether they have any real knowledge of the relevant evidence. I know they do not.

The "old" evidence is utterly destructive of the official solution. However, the day for it has passed in the press. This story, which does not address it, is merely the latest example. This is not to say that there is no "new" evidence. It is to say that you avoided it. There is an enormous amount that I have.

Having said this and having in the past been unable to give it away, I also say that with the attitude of the past persisting in the present, specifically in this story, I am not again offering to give it away. I am probably the only writer in the country who is not paid for his work. It is not a career I recommend.

In a way I am challenging the journalistic integrity of the Star-News in this. In the recent past I have offered it substantial, indeed incontrovertible information dealing with the t^hical. To the best of my knowledge it has been ignored. I have in mind both Jaworski and Ford.

Last week I file a freedom of information suit that by the news standards with which I am familiar is news. It went entirely unreported in the Star. You can check it in federal district court, C.A. 2052-73. I welcome a statement that this is not today newsworthy or that it is not a serious action or that it does not address some of what your effort did pretend to go into.

About a month ago I filed a petition in the court of appeals (71-1026) that also went unreported. I invited a statement that the content is frivolous or commonplace and this not newsworthy or that the legal questions are not at least unusual. In an earlier stage in this litigation, there was a decision favorable to me. The minority concluded that the "issue", in the judge's words, "forfeits against this ~~application~~ ^{appeal}."

applicant's proposed further inquiry into the assassination of President Kennedy. Requiescat in pace." He felt the Latin deserved caps. But your paper and all others believed a judicial fiat that a writer in this country should be foreclosed entirely from any inquiry is insignificant, certainly not newsworthy, for in the ensuing nine months not one has mentioned it.

Were I to recommend a text, Pastor Niemöller's comes to mind.

My view is that this judicial language makes ~~me~~ prior restraint look like a blessing.

By the standards of the past, any language like this is newsworthy and would have justified editorial attention.

What I am asking is what the hell has happened to the papers? What more than a Watergate does it take to persuade them to address the state of information available to the people in a representative society and their own role in it?

Let me be specific, since you do not know, what Orr Kelley and at least two other of your reporters were not interested in:

Evidence that the current vice-presidential nominee was a common grafter, putting a political crony on the public payroll to ghost a book that included what even today is top secret (and is denied me, thus the suit) and that swore falsely about it before the Senate Rules Committee.

Evidence that the new Watergate Special Prosecutor was himself a CIA money launderer and personally saw to it that the rumors that Oswald was a federal informant were killed. In addition, in a role exactly paralleling his present one, he saw to it that the biggest whitewash of them all was pulled off the only place any law was applicable when JFK was killed, in Texas.

My documentation is beyond any questioning, and I challenge you to take this as a challenge.

When Kelly did not call back after I received some of my files that were not in my possession I offered this to the Post. It did get what it wanted, about 40 pages. In two weeks the story has not appeared. It was written and perhaps it yet will.

Winfrey's piece makes ~~this~~ reference to the late Senator Russell. There is what I regard as quite a story here. I sold it to the National Enquirer months ago when they asked me for something new on this assassination. They were excited and planned to make a big thing of it. Although the evidence was complete, they decided to do some personal checking with members of Russell's staff. They got complete confirmation. Then, without letting me know, they decided to kill the story. When I asked why it had not appeared I learned they had killed it. You can evaluate the reason and whether or not it had not been true when they first spoke to me. It is that Russell is dead!

I put in Russell's hands what led him to break a lifelong friendship with LBJ. He then also surrendered all his CIA oversight responsibilities.

This remains my literary property. I did not approach any of the so-called responsible ~~press~~ press because I know policy not editorial judgments apply in this subject. However, I do offer the Star a chance to put its money where its mouth is with no obligation except preservation of confidentiality if it is not satisfied with what I have or if we do not come to terms. More, I make the same offer I did to the "Inquirer, write it your own way and have no concern about my beliefs or interpretations.

My own beliefs I do not hide. I believe that the ~~abst~~ abdication of the major media when JFK was killed is what gave us Watergate and what it can yet mean. My hope is that the media will find itself before it is too late.

Should you want to get in touch with me, I will be away from Friday morning until Saturday night. I will be at Georgetown, at the conference on the assassinations. I was suckered into it after declining.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg